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GOETHE'S SESENHEIM SONGS

BY

OSCAR F. WEBER

THESIS

FOR THE

DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE

IN

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May 31, 1922

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY

OSCAR F. WEBER

ENTITLED GOETHE'S SIESENHEIM SONGS

IS APPROVED BY ME AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE in EDUCATION

Edwin Croker

Instructor in Charge

APPROVED:

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT OF

Edwin Croker



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The Young Poet.

Leipzig of 1765, with all the patent superficialities, that, through French influences, had found their way into the social, religious, and political circles of its life and very seriously threatened the stability of its tenor, was far from an ideal place for a promising and rather spoiled young man like Goethe at sixteen. But when amid this corruption the youthful poet, from the very fullness of his heart, sang of sincere affection, of genuine appreciation, of true love he was at once recognized by a few of the great literary critics of his time as an outstanding genius.

In Strassburg.

But his stay in Leipzig was brought to an abrupt close by a serious illness. Sad and almost disconsolate he returned to Frankfort. For some time there was doubt as to his recovery. Only after many months could his parents hope to have him pursue his studies. They then sent him to Strassburg to complete his course in jurisprudence.

With his recovery he returned to his contemplation of the big and important things in life. That much of his class work was a mere "marking of time" we learn from reference to his "Ephimerides", a diary that gives no uncertain evidence of the deep problems and the serious undertakings with which this young man was then concerned.

Here, too, he came in contact with Herder who awakened in him new thoughts and directed him to the well defined need for more thorough going investigations and first hand original creations in

German science and literature. This great leader of the Storm and Stress Period made an extraordinary impression upon the young man. Through Herder, too, Goethe learned to appreciate and honor Shakespeare with youthful ardor. The creations of the great English genius were for him both a revelation and a model of a new literary freedom which gave him courage to hope to fulfill the visions that thronged his own mind. All the impulses that he had earlier experienced, and that he had set aside because of his illness, if not already because of the superficiality of life in Leipzig, showed themselves now in full sway. Although he applied himself earnestly enough to the attainment of the liberal accomplishments he learned early the evaluation of emotion. It was Herder who taught him to guard against the commonly accepted misconceptions and the narrow, stock interpretations that always seriously handicap the development of science and art and to put himself in tune, as it were, with the eternal purpose in the universe.

Under these inspiring influences Goethe conceived his "Götz von Berlichsen" and made a preliminary sketch of that drama. Here "Faust" surged through his being. But what is probably most significant is that it is from this time that we have from his pen the most beautiful songs of love that ever human soul poured forth. For the student of Goethe, fully acquainted with the historical background there is no question about the genuineness of these poems. And still, there are, unfortunately, circumstances that throw this whole period into a mist of misconceptions, falsehoods, and even the most pernicious slanders and defamations. Why? we ask ourselves.

In Sesenheim.

Not far from Strassburg lay Sesenheim. Here, in the protestant vicarage, lived the Brion family, consisting of father, mother, three older daughters, a younger daughter and a son, a very pleasant and exceptionally hospitable family circle. into which Goethe was introduced through his friend Weyland, a relative of the family, on a bright spring morning in the year 1770. Cordially enough received by all the members of the family Goethe, nevertheless, found himself more frequently in the company of Friederike, the third oldest daughter, a young lady of eighteen or nineteen. She was a vivacious, happy being whom he soon loved most sincerely.

Out of this pure love of the young poet we have the so-called Friederike Poems, sacred songs of eternal, absolute love. As messages of love to Friederike they are filled with recollections of many happy hours spent in field and wood and of promises of eternal faith.

The fact, however, that Goethe after he left Strassburg wrote to Friederike or rather to her parents just one time and that after that there was no further correspondence precludes the assumption that he left her in order later to return. And still Goethe's love was not, as Düntzer suggests, a "frivolous passion" but rather the deepest, most sincere and real love, that followed him to his grave. Late in life he said:

"Ach, wer bringt die schönen Tage,
Jene holde Zeit zurück."

One should like to believe that we might have wished a happy

conclusion. And still we must not forget that Goethe in his nineteenth year suffered from a serious lung trouble, that even in Strassburg he attributed to himself at best a questionable health, and that Friederike, too, was suspected of being consumptive. Besides, Goethe had very definite ideas as to what responsibilities marriage involved:

"Liebe ist etwas Ideeles, Heiraten etwas
Reeles und nie verwechselt man ungestraft
das Ideeale mit dem Reelen".

Later this conviction took a still more definite form:

"Eine solche jugendliche, aufs geradewohl
gehegte Neigung ist der nächtlich geworfenen
Bombe zu vergleichen, die in einer sanften
glänzenden Linie aufsteigt, sich unter
die Sterne mischt, ja einen Augenblick
unter ihnen zu verweilen scheint, alsdann
aber abwärts, zwar wieder dieselbe Bahn,
nur umgekehrt, bezeichnet und zuletzt da,
wo sie ihren Lauf geendet, Verderben
hinbringt."

Where Goethe erred is in the over-emphasis he placed on what he called his guilt in having given himself with such complete abandon to this love. Goethe was not unfaithful in any sense in which we might be inclined to interpret unfaithfulness. He felt, however, he should have exercised sufficient precaution not to have led

Friederike to look forward to their marriage.

Bode caught this tone of self-condemnation and realized the disastrous effect it had on Goethe's life. Thus he says:

"Kurz, der Erzähler lenkte in dieser
Liebesgeschichte alles Licht auf das
Mädchen und allen Schatten auf sich
selber. Das zeugte von dem Adel seiner
Seele, aber nichts hat seinem sittlichen
Rufe so sehr geschadet wie diese frei-
willige Selbstbeziehung."

In a conversation with Eckerman, Goethe had said, in his eightieth year, that there was in his account of the Sesenheim incident, as contained in "Dichtung und Wahrheit", not a thing that was not true and yet that nothing was there portrayed precisely as it had been experienced, a fact that is borne out by careful study of the poems.

The Aftermath in Song and Story.

Before the appearance of "Dichtung und Wahrheit" one paid very little attention to the Friederike episode. Friederike herself probably rarely mentioned her experience and Goethe, no doubt, considered it wise to leave this remembrance of youthful pleasures undisturbed. What then, could have directed later attention to the matter? For the Friederike story has been widely rehearsed in song and story. And the investigations of so-called "students of research" have thrown about the incident the vilest slanders and the

most disgusting insinuations.

In the first place, the commonplace conception of "jilting a girl" carries with it all sorts of inferences. Then, after Goethe's information in "Dichtung und Wahrheit" had been made known there was no dearth of "investigators" who wished to get first hand information. There were among the inhabitants of the little Alsatian village many accommodating old folks who were only too glad to gossip about the matter. It is not necessary to do more than to allude to the inventive genius of the ignorant. One can imagine with what zest even those who knew nothing of the matter might add incident upon incident to a tale.

Aside from this there is evidence that a decided hatred that a certain religious sect had for Goethe and his philosophies led to deliberate misrepresentations and open canonical denunciations.

Lenz.

In the spring of 1772 the poet Lenz of Livonia, in the capacity of tutor, accompanied the two young Lords Kleist to Strassburg. When the regiment, to which the younger nobleman was attached, was transferred to "Fort-Louis", a fortified island in the Rhine, Lenz found himself within a short distance of Sesenheim. On a walk one beautiful May morning the young lord and his tutor, who was a minister's son and theological student, chanced into the vicarage. Both were most hospitably received. Lenz at once interested himself in Friederike.

In spite of the fact that Friederike had suffered from her

earlier love experience, there were no doubt walks in field and wood, enjoyable dances, happy songs and maybe even games of forfeit for the young folks. But Lenz was a peculiar lover. He was sentimental and distrustful, talented and eccentric. In his every act he showed the extravagant and perverse addictedness of a child. His sentiments were too passionate for friendship and too discreet for love. The psychologist Wieland has given us the following picture of the inner conflicts of his strange nature:

"ein heteroklites Geschöpf, gut und fromm wie ein Kind, aber zugleich voller Affenstreiche, daher er oft ein schlimmerer Kerl scheint als er ist und zu sein vermögen hat; er möchte immer etwas beginnen und wirken und weiss nicht was---aber man muss ihn mild beurteilen, den guten Jungen, der mit soviel Genie ein dummer Teufel, und mit soviel Liebe bisweilen ein so boshafte Äffchen ist."

Withal, however, it seemed for a time that Lenz might compete with Goethe for public recognition and favor. Still, Lenz could hold himself to nothing with any degree of definiteness and persistence. And so it was too with his lovemaking. He believed he could take Goethe's place in the affections of Friederike. In this he failed completely, however. Goethe had left Sesenheim because he saw for himself a greater career ahead. Lenz left Sesenheim because he could see nothing before him and did not have the courage to hope to see anything. In his dreams Lenz lived in a wonderful world of fancy, he gained some few friends here and there, even produced

lasting works but went down in incurable mental darkness in his struggle with the powerful, eternally creating, eternally growing giant Goethe.

The Differences of Opinion.

Here we have, then, two men as different as one could think them. Their experiences in a love affair with the same girl are as varied as their natures. And yet there is a question about the authorship of the eleven poems which in thought and emotional content present a complete unity.

Goethe's Account.

Goethe himself deals with only two of the poems; namely the well-known "Mit einem gemalten Bande" and the so often misinterpreted "Willkommen und Abschied". That has caused many critics no end of concern. "Why", they say, "did he say nothing of these other poems if they are indeed his?" In answer it is necessary merely to point to the fact that Goethe rarely had anything to say about his own poetical creations as it was also decidedly distasteful to him to be asked anything concerning the interpretation of any passage.

After Goethe had, in 1779, on his return from Switzerland, visited Friederike once more he wrote to Frau von Stein:

"Ich fand alte Lieder, die ich gestiftet hatte."

And later he said in "Dichtung und Wahrheit":

"Ich legte für Friederike manche Lieder bekannten Melodien unter. Sie hätten ein artiges Bändchen gegeben; wenige davon sind übrig geblieben, man wird sie leicht aus meinen übrigen herausfinden."

Further than that we have nothing from him. He believed as he said, that: it would be easy to pick them out from among his other works. He might have added as he did on another occasion "if you are not too stupid".

The Poet and Humanity.

That after a score of years, yes, after a century, there would be people who would wish to know every particular incident of the love affair, did not at all occur to the poet. But even if it had occurred to him he should have wished to keep himself aloof from such mass curiosity. Here and there, no doubt there have been people, who knowing too much of the details of the love affair, have felt their "heart's blood congeal within them", because they thought themselves into the barrenness of a lost love. Still the thousands and thousands who have read in the lines only the symbolization of eternal love, have realized how significant the words are. And although it may be that the individual lover should not have written words so full of significance yet the poet must do it. We have here the difference between the particular and the general, the passing and the eternal, the material and the spiritual.

The Confusion of Manuscripts.

Genuineness of handwriting cannot be referred to as an evidence of the genuineness of the poems. Friederike early made copies of the poems. Although Kruse believes to have seen the originals in 1835, Stöber found only copies that had been made by Friederike's sister Sophie. After the death of Lenz three of the poems were found among his personal effects, a matter not so difficult to explain when we remember that although Lenz was very jealous and envious of Goethe he tried to get possession of every thing that Goethe produced.

But why, we may ask, did Friederike make copies of the poems? That is a matter easily explained when we remember that, no doubt, all of these poems were sent to her as letters or parts of letters. As a symbol of what she had a right to believe to be the deepest of sincere love they were to her a sacred treasure, that she sought to hide from the curious world as fully as the secret within her breast. The poetry the world might have, the letters were her own. This religious insistence on guarding the letters seems to me to be an evidence of the genuineness of the poems. I cannot bring myself to believe that Friederike would have concerned herself so with guarding letters or poems Lenz had written even if they had been dedicated to her. And so one does not find among the letters which Falck found among the personal belongings of Lenz after his death any of those like "Jetzt fühlt der Engel", or "Ich komme bald ihr goldnen Kinder" which must have lain close to the heart of Friederike but rather such as "Nun sitzt der Ritter an dem Ort", "Ach bist du

fort?" and "Als ich in Sarbrücken". Just such poems as she might use to tease her new lover. The most personal she guarded from the gaze even of Lenz, however.

That Friederike seemed to possess no originals led Bielschowsky to make the following remark:

"Es ist einigermaßen auffallend, dass Friederike gerade so sicheres Goethisches Eigentum wie "Mit einem gemalten Bande" und wohl auch "Jetzt fühlt der Engel" nicht im Original besass; und uns beschleichen Zweifel, ob überhaupt Kruse Goethische Originale vor sich sah und ob die "zierliche Hand", die er für die Goethische hielt, nicht einem andern Dichter des vorigen Jahrhunderts angehörte."

It will not do, of course, to go that far or we should have to ascribe "Mit einem gemalten Bande" and "Willkommen und Abschied" to this other poet of the "graceful hand". Since there are no originals we must content ourselves with determining the genuineness of the poems from other evidence.

Sincere Emotion.

With Bielschowsky's view, that Goethe's relationship to Friederike had no enduring significance, I cannot agree. Bielschowsky says, for instance, "Friederike wurde ausser von Goethe noch von Lenz und vielleicht andern uns unbekannten Männern geliebt, die sie ebenso gut in Liedern feiern konnten, als Goethe".

It is just because he, like Düntzer, believes the relationship was but a passing frivolous passion that he cannot understand the reverent seriousness of the youthful poet.

From this conception comes the interpretation that Goethe's whole Sesenheim experience was one unbroken round of pleasure "Goethe is always the happy lover", says Bielschowsky in his essay "Concerning the Genuineness and Chronology of the Sesenheim Songs". One has merely to refer to Goethe's letters to Salzmann to realize that his life, while there, far from having been a joy, was a veritable torment.

It is just this misconception that makes Bielschowsky misinterpret the well-known "Willkommen und Abschied". To him the "happy lover" swings himself ahorse like a gallant knight to visit his fair lady love. If the title of the poem could be translated with the once so popular "I should rather say, Hello! than Good-bye!" we might be justified in such a view.

A Sorrowing Heart.

But it is just the opposite view that is the only tenable one. The youthful Goethe has made up his mind to say good-bye forever to Friederike. A definite reason for his decision he cannot give. His conscience troubles him unendurably and---as if God punished him for his folly---when he comes to Friederike she bids him a hearty welcome. Instead of lessening his anguish it increases it. One can readily imagine oneself in the perplexing and embarrassing predicament. Goethe's courage failed him. Only after eight years

when he had visited Friederike once more, on his return from Switzerland could he say with some degree of consolation:

"dass ich nun auch wieder mit Zufriedenheit an
das Eckchen der Welt hindenken und in Frieden
mit den Geistern dieser Ausgesöhnten in mir leben
kann."

From Goethe himself we learn, from his letters to Salzmann, that he spent many a sad day in Strassburg. It will not do, then, to say in advance: It will be a simple matter to distinguish the cheerful and bright poems of Goethe from the more serious and melancholy ones of Lenz.

Doubt and Hesitation.

For even in the most cheerful poems of this Sesenheim period we find traces of doubt and misgiving. To me this so often recurring evidence of uncertainty is an unmistakable mark of the genuineness of the poems. Goethe knew well enough he was sincerely in love, but he knew, too, what he had to do to achieve the well-defined goal he had set for himself. Duty and love contended. Love won until another champion of duty entered the lists. Fear masks in many forms and to the great it is but the intensification of great aspirations. At all events Goethe's struggle was so intense that many years afterwards he could recall clearly that:

"Solche Zerstreuungen und Heiterkeiten gab ich
mich um so lieber und zwar bis zur Trunkenheit
hin, als mich mein leidenschaftliches Verhältniss

zu Friederike nunmehr zu ängstigen anfang---
Wenngleich die Gegenwart Friederikes mich ängstigte,
so wusste ich doch nichts Angenehmeres, als
abwesend an sie zu denken."

His mind, however, was as "changeable as a weathervane at the approach of a storm when the winds shift". Conscience pointed the way but day upon day his will failed. He could arrive at no definite decision. In the following poems this uncertainty is unmistakable:

In the last lines of "Jetzt fühlt der Engel" we find:

"Du gabst mir, Schicksal, diese Freude,
Nun lass auch Morgen seyn wie Heute,
Und lehr' mich ihrer würdig seyn."

Although he had given himself to his love with utter abandon there were these undeniable pangs of conscience that could not but convince him that this circumstance must prove a decided disadvantage to him. In "Mahomet's Gesang" we read later:

"Doch ihm hält kein Schattenthal
Keine Blumen."

But in "Kleine Blumen, kleine Blätter" which might be taken as the accompaniment of a formal proposal of marriage there is:

"Schicksal, segne diese Triebe,
Lass mich ihr und lass sie mein
Lass das Leben unsrer Liebe
Doch kein Rosenleben sein."

A very strange stanza to find its way into this declaration and yet easily enough explained. Goethe felt a "cold chill" come over him. But in order to avoid making a decision himself he leaves the whole matter to fate.

Again, "Ach, bist du fort?" begins as follows:

"Ach, bist du fort? Aus welchen güldnen Träumen
Erwach'ich jetzt zu meiner Qual?"

That he should think of the relationship as a dream gives another evidence of an unsuspected self revelation.

And so in "Balde seh ich Rickgen wieder" the lines:

"O wie schön hats mir geklungen
Wenn sie meine Lieder sang."

show that the poet is thinking of the whole circumstance as a memory of the past. In the third stanza we have again:

"Denn mich ängsten tiefe Schmerzen
Wenn mein Mädchen mir entflieht
Und der wahre Gram im Herzen
Geht nicht über in mein Lied."

The last two lines are especially significant. Bielschowsky seems to be unable to interpret these lines. Indeed, who believes that Goethe was always "the happy lover" could not understand:

"Und der wahre Gram im Herzen
Geht nicht über in mein Lied."

This tendency to evade the responsibility and its consequent unpleasantness shows itself in the last stanza fully:

"Doch jetzt sing ich und ich habe
Volle Freude süß und rein
Ja ich gäbe diese Gabe
Nicht für aller Klöster Wein."

The important word is the word "jetzt". Now, loving, I shall be happy. What comes of it, who can say? He knows that his beloved will not be his. He knows he loves her. He believes love to be its own excuse for being. Why should he not bask in the sunlight of the absolute love?

That this same Doubt is present in "Willkommen und Abschied" there is no question. But one must understand the circumstances as I have already set them forth above, for if it were merely a poem in which in some unaccountable manner, as Bielschowsky says: "Willkommen und Abschied in einen Rahmen zusammen gedrängt ist", the heartrending lines:

"Du gingst, ich stund, und sah zur Erden
Und sah dir nach mit rassem Blick."

would have no significance. It is Friederike who bids him to be welcome. It is he who wishes to take leave. The two things fit together but into a phase of life torn with conflicting emotions. Love wins for the time being and again to fate is left the final determination.

The Spirit of Joviality.

Aside from this doubt that characterizes Goethe's attitude throughout there is a spirit of playful raillery. Just as the timid are certain to whistle loudest when consumed by the biggest fear so the one in doubt will be sure to use good natured jests to tide him over his periods of uncertainty. But we need not resort to this psychological phenomenon. All of us jest with those whom we like best. As a brother teases a sister so Goethe teases Friederike. Thus he says in "Erwache Friederike": You will be punished enough for your laziness. The nightingale did not sing because you did not rise early and because you did not rise early enough and the nightingale did not sing, you did not, of course, hear the nightingale sing. This troubles Bielschowsky greatly that Goethe says the nightingale did not sing and that immediately thereupon that Friederike did not hear the nightingale sing. Therefore, too, Lenz should have written the poem! But Goethe has not finished with his good natured raillery. He goes on to inflict the "punishment". Now you shall hear what I have composed!

In "Jetzt fühlt der Engel" Goethe insists that Friederike belongs to him because he won her in a game of forfeit. "Von Herzen" seems to indicate that the game was a "game of hearts".

"Nun sitzt der Ritter" is as Bielschowsky says a "moody" bit of poetry. Indeed just as moody as the later "Schwager Kronus." In "Schwager Kronus" the stage proceeds too slowly for him, here his horse that stumbles along like blind. And the word "ziemlich"

even if it is the most unpoetic word, as Bielschowsky says, suits the occasion. No doubt Goethe had told the girls a story of knightly adventure. They had then challenged him to a trial of his skill of horsemanship. At all events, he went a-horse with a specific goal in view. But this adventure was followed by a second:

"Da sitz ich nun vergnügt bei Tisch,
Und endige mein Abenteuer
Mit einem Paar gesottner Eier
Und ein Stück gebackenen Fisch."

We can readily imagine that his dreams would take him upon a third. The poem overflows with good natured raillery rather than moodiness.

"Ach bist du fort?" gives us a similar picture. Because Friederike at parting avoided him with her eyes she shall be punished by being obliged to hear of his grief. With what varied feelings her soul must have teemed to see her lover roam, disconsolate, over hill and vale, finally to lie dying at her feet. The words "Vollkommenheit" and "Grausame", which should not, according to Bielschowsky, belong in Goethe's vocabulary, admirably suit the purpose of the author. We can imagine Friederike saying, "So, I am the 'grewsome one', but wait, he calls me 'perfection', too. Strange!" But long she had not to doubt that he teased her, and that, teasing, he loved her still. In any other sense, it is true, a word like "Grausame" would be difficult to explain.

In "Wo bist du itzt?" Goethe says, "You are my sun, my joy, my

life:

"Komm bald zurück! sonst wird es Winter werden
Im Monat Mai."

Even the song "Ein grauer trüber Morgen" finds him jesting:

"Doch in der öden Laube,
Ach, denk ich, wär sie hier,
Ich brächt' ihr diese Traube,
Und sie---was gäb sie mir?"

Why? The answer is not far to seek. This attitude is fully correlative with the doubt of which I have already spoken. Just as one when pained by an injury tries to appear most unconcerned so, too, one torn by grief will try hardest to appear happy. We try to hide from the world that which at heart troubles us most.

But this doubt does not preclude love. It is really the most genuine proof of a transcending love that could not be set aside even for the most urgent calls of duty to a well-defined life career.

The Light of my Life.

There is one thing more to be mentioned in connection with the poems in general. It is another evidence of the depth and sincerity of Goethe's love. The young poet repeatedly calls Friederike his "Sun". Later in life he tells us that the sun was for him almost an object of worship. That it stood for him as a symbol of absolute truth which one could know only in reflected form we learn in the introduction to the second part of "Faust". We can understand then,

too, why Goethe applied to Friederike the term "Vollkommenheit". The fact that he saw in Friederike the absolute love accounts for the humiliation he felt because of his own weakness.

In the song "Erwache Friederike" we find:

"Erwache, Friederike,
Vertreib die Nacht,
Die einer deiner Blicke
Zum Tage macht."

And so in "Ach bist du fort?" again:

"Wie ist die Munterkeit von ihm gewichen!
Die Sonne scheint ihm schwarz."

So, too, in "Als ich in Saarbrücken":

"Seit du entfernt, will keine Sonne scheinen."

These three poems are among those that Bielschowsky ascribes to Lenz. Strangely enough we find in "Ein grauer trüber Morgen" a similar reference.

"O liebliche Friederike,
Dürft ich nach dir zurück,
In einem deiner Blicke
Liegt Sonnenschein und Glück."

And in the second stanza:

"Der Wiesen grüner Schimmer
Wird trüb wie mein Gesicht,
Sie sehn die Sonne nimmer
Und ich Friederiken nicht."

This unity of thought in and of itself would be evidence enough of Goethe's authorship.

The Individual Poems.

However, it might be well to discuss some of the other arguments which Bielschowsky presents in attributing five of these poems to Lenz. In the first place, in the poem "Ach bist du fort?" Bielschowsky deals at length with the structural peculiarities of this song. If, however, we bear in mind the thought and emotional content we discover that everything is subordinated to this content. It will not do either to analyze this as a well-rounded lyric poem. Goethe wrote it in haste and sent it to Friederike as a letter or as a part of a longer letter. Bielschowsky calls the poem "unreal" and "theatrical". Viewed from the standpoint of a bit of good-natured raillery it is anything but "unreal" and "theatrical". The criticism that Goethe used words that do not occur at this time in any of his other poems can be dismissed with the explanation that nowhere else had Goethe met such occasions and that it is the occasion that determines the use of the word. Still it will not do to overlook Bielschowsky's specific charge that Goethe at this age did not mention death. Bielschowsky overlooks that at Leipzig the young poet wrote the following:

"Der Todt führt einst von ihrer Seite
Dich auf zum englischen Gesang,
Dich zu des Paradieses Freude,
Und du fühlst kein Uebergang."

To abandon oneself to absolute love is a human dissolution for divine reintegration. Whoever understands human psychology knows, too, that thoughts of death find their way into the mind of the normal youth quite unavoidably and quite naturally.

When one reads what Bielschowsky has to say about "Als ich in Saarbrücken" one would be inclined to believe Friederike had gone beyond the village limits of Sesenheim on only one or two occasions. Lenz could not possibly have written this song. His letters to Salzmann show he was in far too melancholy a state of mind. This song dances bright and fresh as the May Song. Where the poet is it is raining but his heart is reassured, for he knows where Friederike is there is sunlight and joy:

"Wo bist du itzt, mein unvergesslich Mädchen,
Wo singst du itzt?
Wo lacht die Flur, wo triumphiert das Städchen,
Das dich besitzt?"

And then, O, my light and my life:

"Komm bald zurück! Sonst wird es Winter werden
Im Monat Mai."

That one should not look for artistic style in a song like

"Nun sitzt der Ritter" goes without saying. But here we have in evidence, after all, a peculiar bit of art in the grotesque. It is true the lines "flounder along" and the verses are "overloaded" but so goes the claybank and in such condition is the vestry-keeper.

"Friederike Erwache" is dismembered by Bielschowsky. Much of it should be unpoetic. But just why Lenz should be guilty of such an unpoetic production we are not told. In regard to the use of the nightingale we find the following:

"Der junge Goethe liebt weder eine solche Umschreibung (Philomelens Kummer für Nachtigallengesang) noch überhaupt die sentimentale Sängerin. Er zieht die in Luft und Sonne sich schwingende, fröhliche Lerche vor, so im Maifest, Wanderers Sturmlied, an die "Entfernte". Dagegen haben wir sie bei Lenz in dem citirten (Weinhold 97, S. 230) und in dem Liede "Wo bist du itzt" getroffen."

But if we ascribe "Wo bist du itzt?" to Goethe there is no preponderance of evidence on this issue.

The following stanza causes Bielschowsky considerable concern:

"Ich seh' dich schlummern, Schöne!
Vom Auge rinnt
Mir eine süsse Thrane
Und macht mich blind."

He says, "I do not believe in the truth of this stanza and so I cannot believe in its genuineness either." But why if it is not true should it be ascribed to Lenz? Bielschowsky has overlooked

the important role the tear plays in Goethe's life. Later in life Goethe wrote "Wonne der Wehmut" and "Trost in Thränen". But in many other poems like "Sehnsucht" and in "Nachgefühl" the tear plays an important part. Here the tear is a symbol of a most sacred reverence. The mere thought that he might see Friederike in her slumber brings a reverent awe over him. Tears come to his eyes. She is the life and light of his life.

Love Remains.

My own conviction is that these poems were all written by Goethe. That some are not models of lyric art need not concern us. The big and significant thing is that the poet glorifies absolute love. Whatever the transient circumstances were, whatever one woman suffered, whatever the world may have believed, after all, matters little. From these passing and ephemeral things the poet took the eternal verities of thought and emotion and wove them into songs that will gladden the heart of humanity for countless ages.

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